

## CONKING AND PLATT.

## Resigning their Seats in the United States Senate.

**Their Reasons as Set Forth at Length in Their Letter to Gov. Cornell—President Garfield Accepted of Unwarranted Assumption of Executive Power—Letter of Remonstrance to the President with the Added Signatures of Arthur and James M. McKim—An Adjournment of the Legislature for a Purpose—The Excitement in Washington.**

WASHINGTON, May 16.—As soon as the Senate met today the Vice-President laid before the Senate the following:

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 16.

My dear Mr. President:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th inst., and in reply to inform you that I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant.

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The Senate which the reading of the above caused was augmented when the Vice-President announced that he had another communication to lay before the Senate, and the following was read:

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In this issue the following paper was prepared and signed and presented by Mr. James McKim to the President, who was subsequently informed that you had authorized your name to be added also:

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the late Administration, up to its expiration, less than ten weeks ago, employed Gen. Merritt as an officer is well known, and it is now suggested that any citizen had petitioned for his removal, or for his official duties.

"In the place of an experienced officer in the midst of his term fixed by law, it is proposed suddenly to put a man in who has had no training for the position, and who cannot be said to have any special fitness for its official duties.

"The inauguration of President Garfield, delivered on the 4th of March, stand these words:

"The civil service can never be placed on a satisfactory basis until it is regulated by law. For the good of the service itself, for the protection of the public interest, and for the protection of the public interest, it is proposed to fix the tenure of the minor offices of the several executive departments, and prescribe the grounds upon which removal shall be made during the term for which incumbents have been appointed.

"How could the distinction be which would make major offices a prey to 'intrigue and wrong' and shield 'minor offices' from like havoc, and whether the collections of the country should belong to the exposed or to the protected class, need not be decided here.

"Assuming Gen. Merritt to be an officer of average fitness and honest intentions, he is argued that all Senators should with alacrity advise his displacement by a man of obvious superiority. Possibly it might be said that all should advise the selection in Gen. Merritt's place of a man who, without superior fitness, had received his nomination from the party, conspicuous and exalted service.

"The case in hand does not belong to either of these classes.

"The election of Mr. Robertson and his legislative and professional experience and surroundings, his long and honorable service in the country, his knowledge, business habits, and familiarity with the revenue laws and system of the United States which might make him more competent than Gen. Merritt to collect the vast revenues and administer the vast business pertaining to the port of New York. Certainly he cannot in this respect be held an exception to the rule of right and consistency on which the Constitution and laws have placed the public service.

"We know of no personal or political services rendered by Mr. Robertson so transcendent that the Collectors of New York should be taken in the midst of a term and given to him as recompense.

"Mr. Robertson is reported by the *New York Tribune* to have declared that his nomination was a 'reward'—a reward for action as a delegate to the National Convention.

"Mr. Robertson, in his action, was influenced by a sense of duty, it is said, and not by his honest convictions, it is difficult to see what claim he has for any reward, not to speak of such great reward.

"The action of which an estimate is thus involved is understood to be that of the Senate.

"Mr. Robertson and sixty-nine other men accepted from a State Convention a certain trust. They sought and accepted the position of agents or delegates to a National Convention. The State Convention declared a plainly stated judgment and policy, and the Senate, in its action, accepted that judgment and policy.

"But several of them, in addition, made most specific personal pledges and engagements to exert themselves in good faith throughout to secure the nomination of a certain man to the office of Collector of New York, named for offices connected with the courts, district attorneys and marshals. These were their reappointments. Most of them had been originally commissioned by Mr. Hayes. They were certified by the judges of the courts, and by the district attorneys, who attested the faithfulness and merit of their service, and recommended their continuance. They were not presented by us. We have not attempted to 'dictate' nor have we asked the nomination of one person to any office in the State. Indeed, with the exception of the written request set forth above, we have never expressed an opinion to the President in any case, unless questioned in regard to it.

"It is insisted that he 'organized the bolt,' or, as it has been sometimes said, 'he was the leader of the bolt.' This is to say that he induced, persuaded, induced others whom he knew had given their word, and had obtained their seats by doing so, to violate their word and betray not only Republicans assembled in State Convention, but the Republicans of their district, and the Republicans of the State.

"Whoever counsel and procures another to do a dishonest or dishonorable act must share with that other the guilt, and should share also the odium attaching to it.

"We are therefore wholly unable, upon what ever grounds, to give our assent to a resolution which we believe to be unwarranted and which we believe to be unwarranted and which we believe to be unwarranted.

"But the appliances employed to effect results set up new standards of responsibility to invade a true and honest and principled action, which the separate and coordinated branches of the Government stand.

"A Senator has his own responsibility. He is amenable to his State and to the body of which he is a member. He is bound by his oath to 'advise and consent on his conscience and judgment to all bills which shall be presented to him.'

"Whatever or whoever else may constrain him, he is to be exempt from Executive menace or disfavor on the one hand, and Executive inducement on the other.

"Long standing on the orders of the House of Representatives has been a declaration of a member shall suffer expulsion who even reports the wishes of the executive head of the Government to influence the vote of members.

"The British Constitution is not more jealous than ours in this regard.

"To give advice, and honest, independent advice, as to an appointment proposed, is as much the right and duty of a Senator as it is the right or duty of the President to propose the name.

"His advice on any way or the other, it is no more an act of disrespect or treason to the President than it is to the President to propose the name.

"The idea that the Senate is simply to find out what is wanted and then do it we cannot believe safe or admissible, and thus far no party has dared or descended to set up such a test of party fidelity or allegiance.

"In this instance, as in all others, there has been given to the subject, and such distrust has been expressed of the correctness of our positions, that we think it right and dutiful to submit the matter to the power to which alone we are bound and ever ready to bow.

"The Legislature is a session, it is Republican in majority, and New York is in some quite as able as we to bear her message and commission in the Senate of the United States.

"With a profound sense of the obligation we owe, with devotion to the Republican party, and in the face of the great mass of the people, we are ready to do our duty, and we are ready to do our duty, and we are ready to do our duty.

"Only about Mr. Merritt's appointment Collector of New York. It is understood that among the Senators who so advised was Mr. Windom, now Secretary of the Treasury, and head of the department whose subordinates Gen. Merritt is. Another Senator known to have given this advice was Mr. Kirkwood, now Secretary of the Interior. It is said that, like the Postmaster-General from our own State, these Cabinet officers were taken into consultation touching the removal of Gen. Merritt, but their sworn and official action as Senators is none the less instructive.

"That the late Secretary of the Treasury and

## THE NEWS AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

The President informed of the Situation Ahead of the Senate—A Council.

Bad news, if this be such, never travelled faster to the ears of an Administration than this did. The President and his Cabinet knew of this flank movement even before it was done. The Senate learned it at noon, and the President and his Cabinet, or such of them as he could hastily summon, had met and consulted over it a half hour sooner. The telegraph wires that run through the White House to New York and to Albany told the story to an excited private operator, and he made a dash of informing the President that he had just heard the resignations of Roscoe Conkling and Thomas C. Platt going over the wires to the Governor of New York.

They tell the story at the White House that the President, for the moment himself excited by the announcement and disconcerted it said impetuously, 'That is a rookery! Are you sure that you heard aright?' The operator was sure, and the President, pale with excitement, at once sent out for the three Cabinet Ministers who were within a moment's call, Messrs. Blaine, Windom, and MacVeach.

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